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MISSIONARY SELECTION AND TRAINING

E. K. Higdon

Ten years ago last August the foreign division initiated a new method of screening volunteers for Christian service abroad. In the past decade the procedures have been repeatedly revised and improved. Two previous reports on the results of the screening have been made by this department, one in January 1948, the other in November 1950. When the first report was written 114 students had taken the psychologic tests and had the psychiatric interviews. The number had increased to 248 by the time the second report was prepared.

The present report deals with 364 cases and brings the record to May 31, 1953. That was, in effect, the close of the missionary year because candidates and volunteers were presented to the board in May instead of June; and for that reason, it is chosen 17 as the end of the period covered by this report.

I.	Total number of persons who had tests and interviews		364
	1. Rejected	78	
	2. Accepted-no longer candidates	37	
	3. Candidates	107	
	4. Pending	13	
	5. Missionaries appointed	129	
II.	Causes of Rejection of		78
	1. Poor physical health	3	
	Married women	2	
	Single woman	1	
	2. Emotional instability	36	
	(neurotic, psychosomatic, immaturity, etc.)		
	Married men	10	
	Married women	8	
	Single men	9	
	Single women	9	
	3. Temperamentally unsuited	8	
	(poor judgment, unimaginative rigidity, egotism, self-righteousness)		
	Married men	4	
	Married woman	1	
	Single men	3	
	4. Spouse unacceptable	10	
	Married men	3	
	Married women	7	
	5. Fiancee not interested	1	
	Single woman	1	
	6. Parental opposition	3	
	Married men	2	
	Married woman	1	

7. Vocational considerations		5
(interests too limited or too highly specialized; unwilling prepare for vocation indicated by tests)		
Married man	1	
Married woman	1	
Single men	2	
Single woman	1	
8. Inadequate motivation		12
Married men	4	
Married women	4	
Single man	1	
Single women	3	

III. Causes of withdrawal or rejection of persons once accepted 37

1. Developed nervous difficulty-indicating emotional instability		4
Single men	3	
Single woman	1	
2. Developed psychosomatic condition		2
Married man	1	
Married woman	1	
3. Poor physical health		1
Married woman	1	
4. Death during surgical operation		1
Married man	1	
5. Got married		10
Single women	10	
6. Spouse unacceptable or unwilling		9
Married men	8	
Married woman	1	
7. No spouse available		1
Single man	1	
8. Divorce		2
Married man	1	
Married woman	1	
9. Moral issue		1
Single man	1	
10. Unwilling to be immersed		2
Married man	1	
(wife unwilling)		
Married woman	1	
11. Inadequate motivation		4
Married woman	1	
Single women	3	

IV. Cases pending

13

1. Dean refused permission to come to Indianapolis last May	1	
Single woman	1	
2. Awaiting improvement heart condition		1
Single man	1	
3. Developing satisfactory interpersonal relations		1
Single woman	1	
4. Deepening motivations-sharpening vocational interests		2
Single men	2	
5. Gaining maturity-demonstrating ability to serve		2
Single men	2	
6. Awaiting spouse's decision		1
Married woman	1	
7. Cannot carry graduate study-getting practical experience as a builder		1
Single man	1	
8. Must overcome feelings of depression, guilt, unworthiness, anxiety.		3
Married woman	1	
Married man	1	
Single man	1	
9. Character difficulties of neurotic degree--getting psychiatric help		1
Single man	1	

V. Field record of missionaries

129

1. Serving successfully	114
2. Successful but off field because spouse failed	3
3. Failed to adjust	12

VI. Validity of the Health Surveys

1. The tests and interviews revealed no disqualifying characteristics or tendencies in 3 of the 12 missionaries who failed to adjust to life and work abroad.
2. But the following statements are typical of the characteristics of other missionaries who failed to adjust and these characteristics caused trouble on the field:

"a sensitive, introspective, hyperemotional individual ...In initial assignments may be advisable to have work under an experienced and wise counsellor..."

"mild heterosexual anxieties and compensatory sentimentalities."

"most emotional person of all the 12 students examined here, least relaxed...not only rigid but also very tense and disturbed. Relations with people probably are usually strained...very difficult to make an effortless and easy adjustment to others..psychiatric treatment would be beneficial...rather acute and severe neurotic inhibitions."

"tends to avoid emotional experiences and expression because they produce too great a disturbance in him. If an emotional situation is not too disturbing, he can meet it adequately. When the emotional situation becomes more severe, he is likely to be disturbed markedly...more prone to a breakdown, if he encounters severe conflicts, than the average individual."

"...she inclines to be distant and defensively smug when she senses that the listener is not necessarily sympathetic to her opinions...guide her toward fundamentally warmer and more tolerant interpersonal relations."

"On a test of practical judgment he did very poorly for one who wants to enter the mission field...tendency toward unbridled fantasy...under great pressure might become unrealistic, fantasy-ridden and emotional in behavior."

"She suffers from deep seated personal difficulties which have seriously impaired her social adaptations... she could function effectively only if her duties and her interpersonal associations should happen to fit her highly limited capacity for adjustment. Suggest that she be instructed to continue her training while undergoing treatment by a competent psychiatrist for six months to a year."

"She is obviously still at the so-called cardiac-respiratory stage of love...her interest in mission work came after she met her husband...aggressive, quite self-confident, some feeling of superiority."

"immature for her age, and has plenty of room for growth and development but even though the potentialities are there, they still have to be externalized and put into operation...determined, tenacious, and has a life's plan which is organized but must be applied."

3. Among those who have succeeded, six missionaries--three couples--had one or more interviews with psychiatrists after the original Health Survey. One couple has done fairly well and the other two are doing excellently.

No one else among the ¹¹⁴129 (¹¹⁷132 counting the 3 who are off the field because their spouses could not adjust) had any significant personality problems.

4. We note that the psychologists and psychiatrists had serious doubts about the ability to succeed of 9 of the 12 who later came home to stay. One served a term of five years; another, two terms; but none of the others stayed more than three years; and three, only eighteen months.

Of the others romance claimed two, one who became engaged in language school and did not go to the field, another who got married on the field and came home; and the third did not have the staying powers for the job.

All of the ¹¹⁴129 (or ¹¹⁷132) who were considered good to excellent risks by the psychologists and psychiatrists (including the six who had some psychiatric help before appointment) have done well abroad.

Thus these ¹²⁶counsellors ¹¹⁷forecast quite accurately the outcome in ~~141~~ cases (~~132~~ successful, 9 unsuccessful) and missed in only 3 (only one, unless they are expected to know in advance all of Cupid's capers).

VII. Percentages (based on 364 persons)

1. Missionaries appointed		35.43
2. Missionaries withdrawn	3.57	
3. Candidates		29.39
4. Pending		3.59
5. Rejected		21.43
6. Accepted as candidates--later withdrew or rejected		<u>10.16</u>
		100

VIII. Some Conclusions

1. The causes for rejection, withdrawal, and pending cases before appointment, and failure on the field after appointment are mainly of an emotional or tempermental nature as this summary shows:

Emotional instability	54
Inadequate motivation	17
Tempermentally unsuited	13
Marriage	10
Spouse unacceptable or unwilling	10
Family difficulties	7
All other causes	<u>29</u>
	140

Several cases showed a combination of two or more causes.

2. There is practically no loss from physical disability because of very careful checking before the volunteer has the Health Survey. To date this has also been true of those who have become missionaries.
3. The men and women who gave the tests and conducted the interviews were in the beginning too lenient in some cases and recommended acceptance of volunteers who, according to their reports had rather serious personality difficulties. The psychologists and psychiatrists did not then have adequate information about the stresses and strains of life in a mission station.
4. The secretaries of the foreign division, knowing the difficulties of the life of a missionary, sometimes overlooked rather clear danger signals in the reports. When personality clashes caused trouble on the field and the secretaries re-examined the reports, they saw these warnings.

A comparison of the statements about the missionaries who have been withdrawn (VI 2) with the reasons for pending cases (IV 3-9) shows a caution that was not always exercised in the first four or five years. The secretaries are now very carefully observing students before recommending them for candidacy whose disqualifications are no more serious than those of some of the missionaries who were appointed and failed to adjust.

5. The fields must give more careful attention to the orientation and friendly guidance of new missionaries. Proper counselling might have made possible successful adjustment for three or four of the missionaries whose services have been lost.

IX. Friendly Counsel for Missionary Task

This report would be incomplete and misleading if it gave only an objective analysis of statistics and stated a few conclusions. That is merely a part of the story of the dealings we have with students. The executive secretary of this department gives more time to counseling volunteers through correspondence and interviews than to any other part of his task. He tries to be a friend of every one of them. And his colleagues in the division share his concern that no person who seeks their guidance go away without help in choosing his life work and inspiration in developing Christian convictions and character. In the Manual For Candidates, the task of the missionary is defined in these words and young persons are gradually led through our procedures toward this high calling:

"Your task is to prepare to win individuals to Christ and to cooperate with them in organizing congregations where the Church has not been established, and in extending its scope

and influence where it has been established. This you will do so that a world that is unified physically but sharply divided in its ideas and loyalties may know the forgiving love of God; and its peoples through Christ may be reconciled to him and to one another in the Church universal.

"Your knowledge of God and your experience of Christ can not be second hand. Whether you have made a personal commitment to the Savior through the methods of religious education and Christian nurture or through the more abrupt way of conversion before you go abroad, you must know God and have companionship with Jesus Christ. All the techniques that you may be able to master will be of little avail if you lack this driving motive for making Jesus Christ known.

"This is the inner compulsion that sends men out, the motivation that keeps them there. It provides their message and generates their staying power. Without this spiritual compulsion, you may make efficient doctors, engineers, teachers, agriculturalists, directors of play and recreation, nurses - but not successful missionaries.

"A psychiatrist, known and respected internationally, has said: 'We can tell a good deal about a volunteer--his mental ability, his aptitudes, his emotional stability--but who can say what a man can do who puts his life fully into the hands of God?'"

Only you can make the commitment that will give God complete control of all you are or may become.

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